

"Building a Safe Community"

**Yuba County
Sheriff's Dept.**

Catalytic Converter Thefts

What's the one thing you would expect car burglars to steal when they break into your car? The car stereo, a cell phone, or that loose change you keep in the ashtray? All of these things may be, but would you think they would steal your catalytic converter?

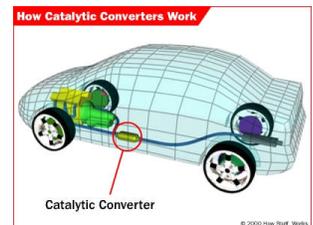
Chances are most drivers don't even know where the device is on their automobiles. But crooks do.

Your vehicle's catalytic converter is a device used to reduce the toxicity of emissions from an internal combustion engine. Catalytic converters have been required by law on every motor vehicle operated in the United States since 1975. It is attached to your exhaust system and is located underneath your car. Catalytic converters contain expensive precious metals like platinum, palladium and rhodium.

Depending on the make of your vehicle, your catalytic converter can be removed in less than two minutes and may require only one wrench. It is not something you immediately notice missing until you start your car and notice a very loud exhaust noise since your exhaust will no longer go through your muffler. A new catalytic converter may cost between \$400 and \$1,500 and the cost to repair the vehicle could be between \$1,000 and \$3,000. So what can you do to protect yourself?

Try to park in a safe and secure place, where a stranger underneath your vehicle would be instantly suspicious. When possible, keep your car in your garage instead of on your driveway or in the street. If you have a car alarm, a competent installer can install an additional sensor on the converter to set off your alarm when the thieves attempt to steal it. For less than fifty dollars, most automotive repair shops or muffler shops can tack weld the nut and bolt which should prevent most thieves from easily unbolting the assembly. Additionally, you can engrave your Driver's License number (but NOT your SSN) on your converter. Having this information engraved on your converter would assist in returning the converter to you if it is recovered, and will also assist in the prosecution of the offender.

If you see someone underneath a parked vehicle, especially late at night or other times when there are little to no other people around, report it immediately to local law enforcement. Yuba County Sheriff's Department emergency 9-1-1 or non-emergency (530) 749-7777.



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